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Achieve vendor certification online

(CMP Media Inc's partnership with Merrimac Interactive Media Corp will enable value-added resellers to become vendor-certified via CMP's ChannelWeb online site)

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ABSTRACT:

CMP Media Inc's partnership with Merrimac Interactive Media Corp (Maple Shade, NJ) will enable value-added resellers (VARs) to become vendor-certified via CMP's ChannelWeb online site. By using Merrimac's CertificationNet Internet-based training product, VARs gain browser-based access to training and certification on ChannelWeb. VARs will have access to live classes or information updates. Students will be able to listen to instructors, view slide presentations, ask questions and hear responses. Merrimac develops and redesigns information technology and sales training content for the Internet. Some of its customers include Microsoft Corp and Novell Inc. The new service is further discussed in the full-text article.

TEXT:

By: Christina Torode

Manhasset, N.Y.-Resellers seeking a quick and easy way to become vendor-certified now have the option of tapping into CMP Media Inc.'s ChannelWeb online site.

Through a recent partnership with Web-based training provider Merrimac Interactive Media Corp., VARs have browser-based access to vendor-authorized training and certification testing on ChannelWeb using Merrimac's Internet-based training product, CertificationNet.

The training is available in an interactive self-paced format or via "virtual auditoriums" that host live, instructor-led courses.

Merrimac develops and re-purposes IT and sales training content for the Web for such vendors as Microsoft Corp., Novell Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., 3Com Corp. and Cisco Systems Inc. It is in the process of signing on several other vendors including a major PC maker, said Harvey S. Kane, chairman and chief executive of Merrimac, Maple Shade, N.J.

"We expect to have business relationships for developing and putting courseware and testing (online) for almost every vendor in the channel," said Kane. "Much of the content (on the site) is reseller targeted such as in the case of a Cisco Sales Expert course," Kane said.

Kane is no stranger to the channel. He is the former president and chief operating officer of GBC Technologies Inc. He left the \$500 million two-tier distributor to join Merrimac in 1996 when it was sold to Globelle Inc.

Merrimac's team of instructional designers also is backed by David Metcalf, a former NASA multimedia designer who developed the virtual auditorium feature of CertificationNet.

Merrimac's self-paced courses contain audio, video and interactive exercises and may be personalized with bookmarks or by picking and choosing lessons within a course. Reporting capabilities for the self-paced titles also are available, allowing vendors to track the number of VARs taking

..courses and the scores of the tests taken.

The virtual auditorium gives VARs access to live classes or information updates hosted by a vendor. During a presentation, students listen to instructors, view slide presentations, see lessons drawn on whiteboards, ask questions and hear instructor or peer responses.

"If a vendor wants to train VARs or internal staff on a product update, it's an astronomical cost for them to either go on a road show or fly partners in," said Kane. "The virtual auditorium lets VARs take a course at their convenience or listen to a presentation and not have to spend a lot of money to travel to a vendor or training center."

The training is free, but there is a fee to take the tests online which varies depending on the certification test. Proctored or supervised tests, which are required to receive accreditation by many vendors including Microsoft for the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer and Novell for the Novell Certified Engineer, are available in Merrimack testing centers in 140 countries. The courses are delivered in several different languages through a partnership with Inlingua International.

The online training and testing programs are available now and can be accessed at www.channelweb.com/training.

Feature Facts: The Site Offers:

- Self-paced courses embedded with audio, video and interactive exercises.
- Virtual auditoriums for live, instructor-led online classes.
- Vendor-authorized training and certification for companies such as Microsoft, Cisco and HP.

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